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MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

Held in Washington, D. C. April 13, 1953

The seventh meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, during the fiscal year 1953, was held in its office in the Interior Department Building on Monday, April 13, 1953. The following members were present:

Mr. Finley, Chairman,
Prof. Belluschi,
Mr. Peets,
Mr. de Weldon,
Mr. Biddle,

also H. P. Caemmerer, Secretary and
Administrative Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING: The Minutes of the Meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, held on March 10, 1953, were approved.

2. HOSPITAL AT FORT BELVOIR, VIRGINIA: Chairman Finley reported that he had received a reply to the letter sent to the Secretary of Defense, protesting against the use of cinder block facing for the proposed hospital at Fort Belvoir, by letter (Exhibit A) from Colonel Robert J. Kasper of the Department of the Army, advising that budgeted funds are insufficient at the present time to begin construction, but when that time comes new estimates will be secured for a possible brick exterior as recommended by the Commission. (See also A-1)

3. ZONING: The Secretary presented the following report from the Zoning Commission:

March 30, 1953

Dear Mr. Caemmerer:

The Zoning Commission in executive session on March 24, 1953, after public hearing held on March 11, 1953, denied a proposal to amend paragraphs 1 and 11, Section XIII, which would prohibit construction of elevator penthouses above a height of 130 feet measured from the level of the curb.

In taking the above action the Commission adopted the majority report of the Zoning Advisory Council, a copy of which is enclosed for your information.

Yours very truly,
H. P. Ashton,
Executive Officer (Exhibit B)

June 30 1953

Division of Fine Arts

Minutes 13 April 1953

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Yours very truly,

H. P. Ashton,

Chairman.

March 11, 1953

Commenting on the report by Mr. Ashton, the Secretary stated that it seemed to him the amendment proposed was somewhat out of order, since the Building Heights Law of 1910, allowed construction of buildings up to 130 feet, not including pent houses. Thus for the past 23 years, since the Shipstead-Luce Act was adopted in 1930, numerous plans for office buildings have been approved in cases where penthouses went beyond the 130-foot limit. In a twelve-story building these penthouses averaged a height of twelve feet, but now that under the Building Code 14 stories will be permitted, it is said this will raise the height of penthouses. Perhaps there will be legislation concerning penthouses in the years to come. I have known of an instance in New York City where a penthouse made a fine apartment.

4. KIT CARSON POSTAGE STAMP: The Secretary reported that, in accordance with the request of the Commission at the meeting on March 10th, he inquired of Mr. Fellingner in the Office of the Postmaster General, whether or not any action has been taken by that Department with regard to the application made by the Legislature of New Mexico for a Kit Carson postage stamp, and that he replied the Department has the matter under consideration. Mr. Fellingner stated further that a special postage stamp is being produced to commemorate the Sesquicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase, so that he could not say what will be done about a Kit Carson stamp.

5. SHIPSTEAD-LUCE ACT SUBMISSIONS: The Secretary presented ten cases submitted by the Building Inspector's Office, under the provisions of the Shipstead-Luce Act. A number of these involved residences along Oregon Avenue, adjacent to the west side of Rock Creek Park. These designs were inspected by Mr. Belluschi, who recommended approval of them, stating:

"They are all about the same. They are all low quality but what is the solution when you really cannot point and say, now you go back and design a better one. It is not possible to do that. They are not

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Mr. Peets remarked: "If we are pretty sure that these buildings will not offend the existing community, I think there should not be any difficulty or question about approving them."

Mr. de Weldon stated: "I think, personally, they are exactly like the existing buildings, as shown by photographs of other houses in the locality, which were inspected." The Secretary stated that he inspected the locality recently and that the situation is as the photographs indicated--scattered houses in a rather undeveloped area.

Thereupon, after some further inspection of the designs, the Commission approved them as well as acted on designs for several other projects, as follows:

- (a) Erect one-story building at 5860 Oregon Avenue, N. W.
Case No. 1551, submitted March 16, 1953; Approved April 13, 1953.
- (b) Alterations to building at 2630 K Street, N. W.
Case No. 1554, submitted April 1, 1953; Approved April 13, 1953.
- (c) Erect 2 one-story buildings at 7060 and 7070 Oregon Avenue, N. W.
Case No. 1555, submitted April 6, 1953; Approved April 13, 1953.
- (d) Erect 7-foot cinder block wall around storage yard at 33 E St. S. W.
Case No. 1556, submitted April 8, 1953; Approved April 13, 1953.
- (e) Erect one-story building at 7040 Oregon Avenue, N. W.
Case No. 1557, submitted April 8, 1953; Approved April 13, 1953.
- (f) Erect one-story building at 7046 Oregon Avenue, N. W.
Case No. 1558, submitted April 8, 1953; Approved April 13, 1953.
- (g) Erect neon-border sign at 301-05-07 Fourth Street, S. W.
Case No. 1559, submitted April 8, 1953; Approved, provided sign is reduced to 25 square feet, April 13, 1953.
- (h) Erect 2 metal signs at 51 Louisiana Avenue, N. W.
Case No. 1560, submitted April 10, 1953; Held for scale drawing.
- (i) Install new store front at 3000 Connecticut Avenue, N. W.
Case No. 1561, submitted April 10, 1953; Approved April 13, 1953.
- (j) Repairs to store front at 617 Fifteenth Street, N. W.
Case No. 1562, submitted April 13, 1953; Approved April 13, 1953.

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Several of the above-mentioned cases arrived "this morning" and the Secretary stated: "of them are not going to worry much about fine detail--that is a thing

"I do not like this way of submitting them to the Commission. When plans come in, I should have time to examine them and prepare a memorandum for the Commission, especially when they involve the Building Code, Zoning, and other questions. Here we have three or four sets of plans brought in this very day. It is embarrassing to me and to the Commission to present them in this way, and I just do not like it. Yet the builders always want a report without delay."

Chairman Finley said: "I think, if the Commission has enough information before them, as in this case, to pass judgment, then we should do so. But if something important is involved and they come at the last minute with submissions, then we must postpone action until the next meeting."

6. MILK DRIVERS UNION HEADQUARTERS BUILDING: Mr. Leon Chatelain, Architect, submitted a design for this building, together with a perspective, to be built at Third and D Streets, N. W., northeast corner, diagonally across from the Municipal Center Building. Mr. Chatelain said that it is to be a four-story office building, to be faced with limestone and polished granite trimming, including the spandrels. It has a length of 120 feet on Third Street and 66 feet 4 inches on D Street; the height is 48 feet to the cornice. White brick or buff is planned for the back of the building. Mr. Chatelain said the working drawings have not been made. Thereupon he left the meeting.

The Commission then discussed the design. Mr. Peets remarked that the design is a good deal like the other buildings in the vicinity, and Mr. Belluschi replied, "That is why I did not say anything. I think it is a complete mishandling of the monumental style, just a sort of fake approach to the old style and I have no sympathy with it whatever. It would be nice to get down to a fine old brick building where a window counted for a window, instead of putting in three-story windows. He has done it in a way 80 percent of the architects would do it."

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Chairman Finley remarked, "Architects want to build monumental buildings and most of them are not going to worry much about fine detail--that is a thing of the past. This is the trend."

Mr. Belluschi replied, "The only way to be really effective in a situation like this is not to talk about it and not to make a motion to be righteous about it. That is why I was not going to say anything. The only thing that can be done is to have some really good buildings that will respect the unity of Washington as a city and at the same time, get away from handicaps of this sort which show a lack of ingenuity in trying to find what would be an honest expression."

Mr. Peets felt that this is an ideal situation; that "Mr. Chatelain is very intelligent, obliging, and has brought the design for comments from the Commission; it would result in restudying the design and submitting a revised drawing. What can we do at any time in any relation unless we try to do something about this?"

Mr. Belluschi said, "I am sorry that I spoke because it gets into a rather complicated situation. I think the trend has to be established, and it is a very difficult thing to do. To respect unity is one thing, but to go forward and have really created a thing that will not be stretching the monumental is also important."

In view of the absence of Mr. Neild and Dean Hudnut, it was decided that prints of the design be sent to them for their criticism and for further consideration of the subject at the next meeting of the Commission.

7. MURAL PAINTING FOR THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE: Mr. David C. Persina, Chief of the Division of Design, Public Buildings Administration, accompanied by Mr. Mitchel Jamieson, painter, presented a sketch for a mural painting in the conference room (the walnut room) of the office of the Comptroller General, General Accounting Office. The sketch was executed on the

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7. MURAL PAINTING FOR THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE: Mr. David C. Persins, Chief of the Division of Design, Public Buildings Administration, accompanied by Mr. Mitchell Jamieson, painter, presented a sketch for a mural painting in the conference room (the walnut room) of the office of the Comptroller General, General Accounting Office. The sketch was executed on the

scale of $1\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1' and the painting will be 17 feet long and 15 feet wide. It is to be about two and one-half feet from the floor. Mr. Jamieson explained the sketch:

"The title is Historic Dare County, which is the region of the out banks, including Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. I do not know whether the theme was set and some of the subject matter was suggested in connection with it, but I relied almost completely on my own experiences down there as far as the physical aspect of the country and seascapes were concerned.

"Naturally, there were some historical things that had to be taken into account which would suggest that significance. But in effect, I tried to subordinate the purely illustrative to the feeling I had about the physical aspect of the country, which is mainly a barren, wind-swept coastal strip. The kind of movement I felt down there and the kind of country I felt, I tried to incorporate into the mural using the illustrative aspects, Fort Raleigh and the flight of the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk as much incorporated into the overall feeling as I could.

"Virginia Dare County is in North Carolina and is the site of the first settlement in America, the site of the birth of the first white girl, the site of the first baptism."

Chairman Finley asked why Virginia Dare County is being made the subject of the painting? Mr. Persina replied that is because the Comptroller General, Lindsey Warren and a Congressman for many years, comes from that County in North Carolina.

Mr. Biddle said he likes the painting very much, and on motion by him, seconded by Mr. de Weldon, the Commission approved the painting (Exhibit C).

Commenting on the painting, Mr. Peets said, "At first glance, I was bothered a little by the conspicuousness of the seagulls. Now, I observe you introduced the gulls for a unifying element in the landscape."

Mr. Jamieson said, "In effect, they actually make up the movement of the design and divide the areas where I have incorporated these elements, actually little vignettes or parts of the areas where the interest is in the actual illustrative element of the country." The sketch is painted in tempera, oil base; the finished painting will be in oil.

8. PROTEST FROM PALISADES CITIZENS ASSOCIATION; SUGGESTION FOR ENLARGING THE SHIPSTEAD-LUCE ACT AREA: Pursuant to the letter considered at the

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THE SHIPSTEAD-LUCE ACT AREA: Present to the latter considered at the

March meeting of the Commission, a letter has been drafted to be sent in reply, as follows:

"The Commission of Fine Arts does not have jurisdiction over designs of residences at the intersection of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the proposed Fort Drive. Under the Shipstead-Luce Act the Commission has jurisdiction only over land adjacent to specified streets and parks. It would require an Act of Congress to extend this jurisdiction to the Memorial Parkway.

"We note that you urge 'a tightening of the zoning law' so as to prevent any further erection of the type of residences that are now being built in your locality. If a letter of complaint of this character is addressed to the Zoning Commission and that Commission should call on the Commission of Fine Arts for advice in this matter, we shall be glad to cooperate.

"A suggestion by your Association to the future occupants of the residences for landscaping the lots, particularly along MacArthur Boulevard, would improve the appearance of the project."

The Secretary presented photographs of the four houses under construction, which were inspected, and the Commission felt that the protest was justified. The Commission approved the letter and it was sent accordingly (Exhibit D).

During the discussion the Commission had noted that no new Shipstead-Luce Act map had been issued since 1939. Mr. Peets felt that the National Capital Planning Commission should be informed of this. Mr. Belluschi said that if so much of the area adjacent to Rock Creek Park is within the area prescribed by the Shipstead-Luce Act, certainly there are other parts of the District of Columbia that are equally important.

The Secretary reported that the subject has been discussed several times in past years, but only once has the Act been amended, namely on July 31, 1939, when Lafayette Park was included in the Shipstead-Luce Act area.

The Commission decided that a letter be prepared, addressed to the National Capital Planning Commission, suggesting a new Shipstead-Luce Act map, to include new areas such as parts of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. A copy of the discussion is attached hereto and made a part of these minutes (Exhibit E). See also E-1 for letter to National Capital Planning Commission. The subject is to receive further consideration at the next meeting on May 15.

follows:

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"In connection with your association with the future development of the area for Washington, the local authorities should be particularly interested in the appearance of the project."

The Secretary presented photographs of the four houses under construction,

and was informed, and the Commission felt that the houses were (Exhibit A).

The Commission approved the latter and it was sent accordingly (Exhibit B).

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9. FOGGY BOTTOM HOTEL AND OFFICE BUILDING DEVELOPMENT: In view of recent publicity given this project, and, in accordance with a request of Chairman Finley, the Secretary sent a letter to the John W. Harris Company, Builders, 30 Rockefeller Center, New York City, suggesting that the Commission of Fine Arts be informed as to this project, so that the Commission could know of the status of the project in its preliminary stages. A reply was received indicating that the publicity given was too previous, but that a representative of the firm would attend the meeting of the Commission on this date:

Dear Mr. Caemmerer:

We have your letter of March 27th.

The project was presented to the Coordinating Committee (of the National Capital Planning Commission), and it was our understanding that you were represented on that Committee, but we find this was not the case.

The project has not advanced very far relative to the design of individual buildings, and it was our intention because of this to present it to you a little later when preliminary ideas were somewhat more definite. The publicity we regret. It was unauthorized, and we had nothing to do with it. We shall be glad, however, to come before you at your meeting on April 13th, at 11:30 a.m., to describe to you, as decided over the telephone, the preliminary plans. We have no elevations, and only one perspective of the Hotel and Office Building project which appeared in the newspaper, and this is not definite.

Yours respectfully,
CHESTER L. CHURCHILL,
Planning Consultant.

Mr. Churchill arrived about noon, and explained the project to the Commission. He presented a preliminary plot plan, which was discussed. The Commission recognized this as a huge project (involving, as was reported \$50,000,000). The firm has an option on the land until September, 1953. Mr. Churchill assured the Commission of the cooperation of the firm and that he would keep the Commission advised of developments. A copy of the discussion is attached hereto and made a part of these Minutes. (Exhibit F).

10. GRAND PLAZA DEVELOPMENT; OPPOSITE THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE: Chairman Finley presented a memorandum showing that the Public Buildings Service of the

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10. GRAND PLANS DEVELOPMENT: REPORTS THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE: Chairman

Chairman presented a memorandum showing that the Public Buildings Service of the

General Services Administration rents the ground under a two-year lease and that the Government receives approximately \$14,000 a month for 1400 autos parked there during the day.

During the afternoon the Commission made an inspection trip to the site, and the Commission decided that the plans for development of the Plaza by the Public Buildings Service should be carried out without further delay.

11. TEMPORARY WAR BUILDINGS: The Commission considered the subject of removal of Temporary War Buildings from the Mall, and from other park areas throughout the city. Chairman Finley called attention to a letter that the Secretary of Interior has sent to the President on the subject (Exhibit G). See also G-1.

It was noted that Temporary Building S mentioned in the letter is located at Independence Avenue and Third Street, S. W., facing the Mall, and is recommended as the first to be razed.

Chairman Finley expressed the hope that the temporary war building at Fourteenth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue be soon removed. The Commission discussed this matter in detail. Mr. Peets explained the bearing of the location on the L'Enfant Plan (Exhibit H).

12. CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING: During the early part of the afternoon, the Commission inspected the first unit of the Central Public Library building, at Pennsylvania Avenue, between John Marshall Place and Sixth Street, built about 1940. The Commission noted the vacant land near the library building, used as a parking lot, and deplored the unsightly condition created thereby. The first unit cost about \$1,200,000, and the Librarian of the District of Columbia has his office in that building.

Chairman Finley protested against leaving indefinitely such an unsightly condition in such a prominent situation, and the Commission agreed that the matter should be brought to the attention of the Secretary of the Interior,

...the Government has decided to build a new building for the Library of Congress on the site of the old building, which is now used as a parking lot. The new building is to be built on a site of about 10 acres, and the old building is to be demolished. The new building is to be built on a site of about 10 acres, and the old building is to be demolished. The new building is to be built on a site of about 10 acres, and the old building is to be demolished.

11. THE NEW BUILDING: The Commission considered the subject of the new building, and it was decided that the new building should be built on a site of about 10 acres, and the old building should be demolished. The new building is to be built on a site of about 10 acres, and the old building is to be demolished.

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Chairman Finley expressed the hope that the temporary building at the Library of Congress would be soon removed. The Commission discussed this matter in detail, and it was decided that the temporary building should be removed as soon as possible. The Commission discussed this matter in detail, and it was decided that the temporary building should be removed as soon as possible.

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advising against using park land surrounding the Carnegie Public Library at Eighth and K Streets as a building site for extension of the present building, instead of completing the project already begun on Pennsylvania Avenue.

13. ART AND GOVERNMENT: The Secretary presented the Galley Proof of the Report on Art and Government. Each member of the Commission received a copy for correction and comment. Thereupon Page Proof is to be requested from the Government Printing Office.

The Commission gave the Galley Proof a general review during the afternoon session. Several typographical errors were noted, but in general the Commission were satisfied with the typography and the format as thus far presented.

The Commission decided to leave the matter of a specially designed cover page to the judgment of Chairman Finley.

Mr. Biddle asked when the Report would be ready for distribution.

The Secretary stated that if the corrected galleys are returned to the Government Printing Office within the next two weeks, the page proof would doubtless be available by the middle of May, or possibly before, in which event the page proof could be considered at the next meeting of the Commission on May 15th. The type is then to be plated, and the document should be in print, ready for distribution by the end of June.

14. NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS: The Commission decided to hold their next meeting in Washington on Friday, May 15th; and the June meeting is to be held on Tuesday, June 23.

The Commission adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

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Meeting is to be held on Tuesday, June 23.

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which is situated along park land surrounding the Carnegie Public Library at

C O P Y

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Office of the Under Secretary
Washington, D. C.

27 Mar 1953

Mr. David E. Finley, Chairman
The Commission of Fine Arts

Dear Mr. Finley:

Your letter of 6 March 1953 concerning the new hospital at Fort Belvoir has been referred to the Department of the Army for direct reply. The hospital in question is not a Veterans' Hospital but is an Army hospital which has been under study and design since 1952. The hospital was authorized by Congress on the basis of improving the mobilization capability of the Army. However, the recent Bureau of the Budget directive requires that construction be limited to those projects essential for the current mission of the Army. It is therefore doubtful if the Fort Belvoir Hospital will be started for some time.

Present indications are that budgeted funds are insufficient to fund the current hospital design which provides for a reinforced concrete frame with a concrete block face. The exterior would be treated with a white waterproofing coat which will give it a uniform appearance similar to the exterior of Mt. Vernon. However, a new estimate of cost will be prepared at some future date when the construction is authorized to proceed. At that time consideration will be given to your recommendation to use a brick exterior for the hospital.

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.

ROBERT J. KASPER
Colonel, GS
Chief, Facilities
& Supply Br., OUSA

C O P Y

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Office of the Under Secretary
Washington, D. C.

27 Mar 1953

Mr. David S. Finley, Chairman
The Commission of Fine Arts

Dear Mr. Finley:

Your letter of 6 March 1953 concerning the new hospital at Fort Belvoir has been referred to the Department of the Army for direct reply. The hospital in question is not a Veterans' Hospital but is an Army hospital which has been under study and design since 1930. The hospital was authorized by Congress on the basis of improving the mobilization capability of the Army. However, the recent Bureau of the Budget directive requires that construction be limited to those projects essential for the current mission of the Army. It is therefore doubtful if the Fort Belvoir Hospital will be started for some time.

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Sincerely yours,

Edw.

ROBERT J. KASNER

Colonel, GS

Chief, Facilities

& Supply Br., OUSA

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

April 20, 1953

Dear Colonel Kasper:

Thank you for your letter of March 27th, concerning the new hospital building for Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on April 13th, took note of your statement that budgeted funds are insufficient, as it seems, to fund the current hospital design.

When you prepare your new estimate of cost and ascertain whether or not your Department can provide a brick exterior for the hospital building, we would be pleased to hear from you further before contracts are let.

For The Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.
David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Colonel Robert J. Kasper, Chief,
Facilities and Supply Branch,
Department of the Army,
Washington, D. C.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

April 20, 1923

Dear Colonel Kasper:

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new hospital building for Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The Commission
of Fine Arts, at their meeting on April 13th, took note of your
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fund the current hospital design.

When you prepare your new estimate of cost and ascertain
whether or not your Department can provide a price expected for
the hospital building, we would be pleased to hear from you
further before contracts are let.

For The Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley,
Chairman

Colonel Robert J. Kasper, Chief,
Facilities and Supply Branch,
Department of the Army,
Washington, D. C.

Government of the District of Columbia

ZONING COMMISSION

March 30, 1953

Mr. H. P. Caemmerer, Secy. and Administrative Officer,
The Fine Arts Commission,
Interior Building,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Caemmerer:

The Zoning Commission in executive session on March 24, 1953, after public hearing held on March 11, 1953, denied a proposal to amend paragraphs 1 and 11, Section XIII which would prohibit construction of elevator pent-houses above a height of 130 feet measured from the level of the curb.

In taking the above action the Commission adopted the majority report of the Zoning Advisory Council, a copy of which is enclosed for your information.

Yours very truly,

H. G. ASHTON,
Executive Officer.

HGA:WEC

Encl. 1



March 10, 1953

REPORT OF THE ZONING ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING
REGULATIONS

MARCH 11, 1953 HEARING

Amend Paragraph 1, Section XIII to read:

"1. The provisions of the Act of June 1, 1910, as to spires, towers, domes, pinnacles, penthouses over elevator shafts, ventilation shafts, chimneys, smoke stacks, and fire-sprinkler tanks shall continue in full force and effect, except that on buildings hereafter erected the Commissioners of the District of Columbia shall not approve the construction of fire sprinkler tanks, water towers, or housing for air conditioning equipment or elevator penthouses to a height in excess of 130 feet measured from the level of the curb opposite the middle of the front of the building. Fire sprinkler tanks, water towers, or housing for air conditioning equipment may be erected or enlarged on buildings existing prior to December 1, 1944 as provided under Section XXIII of these regulations."

New wording underscored.

Amend Paragraph 11, Section XIII to read:

"11. In the 110-foot height district buildings may be erected to a height not exceeding 130 feet, provided such buildings face or abut a street or streets not less than 110 feet wide between building lines, and provided, that above the 110-foot level all exterior walls on the street and alley sides and on the sides of the lot abutting a lower height district are set back 6 inches for each foot of height above this level; and provided further, that on buildings hereafter erected fire sprinkler tanks, water towers, housing for air conditioning equipment and elevator penthouses shall not exceed a height of 130 feet measured from the level of the curb opposite the middle of the front of the building. On construction existing prior to December 1, 1944, the Commissioners and the Board of Zoning Adjustment may approve the erection or enlargement of fire sprinkler tanks, water towers, and housing for air conditioning equipment as provided in Section XXIII of these regulations. The set back of the exterior walls of a building located along the alley sides and on the sides of the lot abutting a lower height district as provided by this paragraph shall not be required for any portion of a building removed 10 feet or more from the required rear yard or from the line of the lot abutting the lower height district. Where a rear yard is not required, a set-back shall only be provided within the 10 feet of the lot abutting the rear lot line."

New wording underscored.



The amendments proposed under paragraphs 1 and 11 of Section XIII would eliminate on new buildings the erection of elevator penthouses above the 130 foot level. The area affected is located entirely in the downtown section and encompasses less than one-half of one percent of the city's zoned area. The obvious net effect of the amendment precludes elevator service to the top one to two floors of any new building which is erected to or near the maximum height of 130 feet. This is brought about by the fact that modern elevators require not less than a total of twenty-two feet from the floor of the last story serviced to the top of the penthouse roof. This height might be as much as thirty feet depending upon the speed of the elevator and the amount of over-run required (car height eight feet - over-run six feet - machinery six feet - two slabs one foot each, total twenty two feet).

It appears that another possibility might by indirection, nuisance value, and application of the law of economics prevent builders from effectively utilizing the additional one to two stories recently approved by the Commission under amended regulation on December 16, 1952. If this result can be proven probable the majority of the Council is flatly and unequivocally opposed to the adoption of the amendment. Any other conclusion would be complete reversal of the recommendation made prior to the December 16th decision.

Analyzing the proposal on other grounds the Council believes that there are only two which the Commission should consider as possible justification for the somewhat drastic change proposed. Those are light and air and aesthetics. Our conclusion is that the required open area surrounding penthouses at this level of



building height is adequate due to the mandatory provisions of the Act of June 1, 1910, regulating building heights in the District of Columbia. This Act provides that "penthouses shall be set back from the exterior walls distances equal to their respective height above the adjacent roof". *(See note below).

With respect to the question of aesthetics the Council believes that little if anything is to be achieved by further restricting roof level appurtenances on the higher buildings as there are many instances of properties near or contiguous to such buildings where the limit of height is 110 feet and upon which elevator penthouses and other services features may be placed to a height of 130 feet as a matter-of-right. Furthermore, the Commission should consider the fact that the Supreme Court of the United States has held police regulations invalid when based solely and exclusively upon aesthetics (Welch vs. Swazoy, 214 U.S. 91).

For the reasons above cited the Council recommends that the proposed amendment be denied.

*Note: (Under a resolution of the Zoning Commission dated January 16, 1929, the words "outside walls" as they occur in the above quoted Section of the Act of Congress are interpreted to mean exterior walls on the street sides. This interpretation has been in force and effect since that date. The Council is of the opinion that this construction is incorrect and in derogation of statutory requirements. An opinion from the Corporation Counsel should be obtained).

(S) R. O. CLOUSER

(S) HARRY F. HANSEN

(S) JOHN NOLEN, JR. (Dissenting)



C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

April 17, 1953

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on April 13, 1953, considered the sketch for a mural painting in the conference room of the office of the Comptroller General by Mitchell Jamieson.

The Commission were well pleased with the sketch and approved it.

For The Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.
David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Honorable W. E. Reynolds,
Commissioner of Public
Buildings Service,
General Services Administration,
Washington D. C.

EXHIBIT C

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

April 13, 1953

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David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Honorable W. E. Reynolds,
Commissioner of Public
Buildings Service,
General Services Administration,
Washington D. C.

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

April 13, 1953

Dear Mr. Gray:

Your letter of March 9, 1953, was received in due time, and has received consideration.

The Commission of Fine Arts does not have jurisdiction over designs of residences at the intersection of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the proposed Fort Drive. Under the Shipstead-Luce Act the Commission has jurisdiction only over land adjacent to specified streets and parks. It would require an Act of Congress to extend this jurisdiction to the Memorial Parkway.

We note that you urge "a tightening of the zoning law" so as to prevent any further erection of the type of residences that are now being built in your locality. If a letter of complaint of this character is addressed to the Zoning Commission and that Commission should call on the Commission of Fine Arts for advice in this matter, we shall be glad to cooperate.

A suggestion by your Association to the future occupants of the residences for landscaping the lots, particularly along MacArthur Boulevard, would improve the appearance of the project.

For The Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Mr. Harold Gray, President,
The Palisades Citizens Association,
5050 Fulton Street, N. W.,
Washington D. C.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 THE MOUNTAIN ROAD
WASHINGTON, D. C.

April 13, 1953

Dear Mr. [Name]

Your letter of March 9, 1953, was received in due time, and has

been forwarded to the

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A suggestion by your Association to the future occupants of the residences for landscaping the lots, particularly along MacArthur Boulevard, would improve the appearance of the project.

For The Commission of Fine Arts:

Director

Mr. [Name]
[Address]

Mr. Harold G. [Name]
The National Academy of Design
2050 Fulton Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

uncorrected

MR. CAEMMERER: Mr. Peets, I have this matter on the agenda; it is a question about extension of Shipstead. I have these pictures. This involves a letter to the Palisades Citizens Association. This is the letter that has been drafted.

"Dear Mr. Gray:

"Your letter of March 9, 1953, was received in due time and has received consideration.

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Suggestion by your association to the future occupants of the residences for landscaping the lots, particularly along MacArthur Boulevard, would improve the

Mr. [Name] [Address] [City] [State] [Zip]

The enclosed is a specimen of the [Type of Document]

I have [Action] [Document] [Date]

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

[Name]

[Address]

[City]

[State]

[Zip]

[Title]

[Phone Number]

[Fax Number]

[E-mail Address]

[Web Address]

[Other Information]

[Closing]

[Postscript]

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appearance of the project.

"For the Commission of Fine Arts

"David Finley

"Chairman."

That was addressed to Mr. Harold Gray, Palisades Citizens Association.

I went out there and had pictures taken of the houses about which complaint is made and there they are, and while I sent the draft to Mr. Peets, Mr. Peets brought up the question if it would be advisable to amend the Shipstead-Luce Act to take in some additional park areas.

MR. PEETS: Excuse me. If I might speak on that point, the local citizens in writing to the Commission said, since we understand that the Commission participates in the review of buildings facing on parks, we are writing to protest against this thing. They had the supposition that just because it was a park, that the environing buildings were subject to review. It occurred to me that that was fairly logical that if this reservation along the Potomac had existed at the time the Shipstead-Luce Act was written, it is very probably that it would have been included and it would seem that in the very nature of this situation that every decade or two the matter should be reviewed and there should be a determination as to whether there are not now some areas which should be brought in under the regulations of the

"You are discussing it with him."

"David Smith."

"Smithson."

"That was referred to Mr. Smithson, I believe."

Discussion continued.

I went out there and had pictures taken of the

house that which occupied it and which they had, and

while I saw the draft to Mr. Smithson, I saw it in the

the question of it is quite as important as the house

Since Act to take in some additional part areas.

Mr. Smithson, I believe, is a very good man.

Since the Act is in effect in the District of

since it is understood that the Commission will

review of buildings facing on streets, we are writing to protect

against this thing. They had the suggestion that just

because it was a park, that the surrounding buildings were

subject to review. It seemed to me that that was really

logical that in this reservation along the Potomac had

existed at the time the Shipyard-Act was written, it is

very possible that it could have been left out and it would

seem that in the very nature of this situation that every

decade or two the matter should be reviewed and there should

be a determination as to whether there are not new areas

which should be brought in under the regulations on the

Shipstead-Luce Act.

I do not feel that it is pressing at all but that is a logical development of the idea back of the Shipstead-Luce Act.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: There have been no changes since the Act was passed, no enlargement.

MR. CAEMMERER: It was amended once in 1939 to take in Maffia Park.

MR. PEETS: Maffia Park in 1939; og, yes.

MR. CAEMMERER: That is the only thing.

MR. PEETS: That was at the time -- off the record, please.

(Discussion off the record)

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: You feel that perhaps there should be a study made as to what other areas should be included?

MR. PEETS: Yes, I do.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Then that should be sent to the proper committee of Congress with request for amendment to the Act to include these areas.

MR. PEETS: Yes, I feel that it should perhaps be initiated by a communication to the Planning Commission saying to them, how about it? Aren't you developing some parks now which are costing the public a great deal of money^{and} are done for the scenic protection of the Potomac River? Would it be

I am very glad to hear of your success in the field of the business.

Very truly,
Yours,

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desirable to have some architectural control over the environments of the park?

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I would think that is in order, Mr. Caemmerer.

MR. CAEMMERER: Here is the map which has the approval of the Park and Planning Commission. It was adopted in 1939. Nothing has been done for about 15 years.

Now, at the present time, it takes in an area around the capitol, down Pennsylvania Avenue, and the White House is there and down at the Lincoln Memorial, both sides of Rock Creek Parkway, and Rock Creek Park.

Some years ago, it was suggested that the law be amended to include, say, Dupont Circle, but there have been so many changes made -- and at Thomas Circle.

MR. PEETS: A matter of consistency if the line runs all the way around every detail of Rock Creek Park, it certainly ought to include the park areas along the Potomac.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Fort Drive, is it?

MR. PEETS: Yes. Well, the Fort Drive, not necessarily the Fort Drive, but -- what is this drive up to the falls?

MR. CAEMMERER: George Washington Parkway.

MR. PEETS: Yes, on both sides; they are taking up large areas of the Palisades and the hills there, in order to protect the esthetic value of the Potomac.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: If it meets with everyone's approval, suppose we ask Mr. Caemmerer to prepare a draft of a letter for me to the Park and Planning Commission suggesting it might be well to have a study made of new areas that could be taken in and then when the two Commissions reach an agreement, we could submit the matter to the proper committee of Congress.

Does that meet with everyone's approval?

MR. PEETS: All right.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Yes.

MR. BIDDLE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Meanwhile, I assume the letter is correct that has been prepared to answer this inquiry. We have no jurisdiction at the present time.

MR. PEETS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Is that letter ready for signature?

MR. CAEMMERER: Yes, sir. You have it.

That pretty well covers the agenda except for the galley on the report.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: With that we can wait until after lunch.

MR. CAEMMERER: Simply wanted that for the record.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I have one or two things that we might bring up. We have a little time.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT: TO BE KEPT WITH STRENGTH

apart, and the fact is, however, that the

is better for us to have the human element

to which we will be able to have a really good

to which we will be able to have a really good

and, as a result, the human element is

Consequently,

There is a great deal of human element

and, as a result, the human element is

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C O P Y

D R A F T

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

April 20, 1953

Dear Sirs:

During a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts held on April 13, 1953, the Commission considered a protest received from the Palisades Citizens' Association concerning the architecture of several brick houses that are being built at Ashby Street and MacArthur Boulevard, Northwest. I enclose a copy of the letter, from which you will observe that this building project overlooks the future intersection of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the proposed Fort Drive.

In the opinion of the Commission of Fine Arts the park land in this locality is as important as some of the area adjacent to Rock Creek Park, which is included in what is known as the Shipstead-Luce Act.

The latest official "Shipstead-Luce Act Map" was prepared by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1939. Therefore the Commission of Fine Arts suggest that, not only is a new "Shipstead-Luce Act Map" desirable, but also it would seem that your Commission would deem it advisable to include portions of the George Washington Memorial Parkway thereof in an amended map.

For The Commission of Fine Arts:

Respectfully yours,

DAVID E. FINLEY,
Chairman.

The National Capital Planning Commission,
Interior Department Building,
Washington D. C.

EXHIBIT E-1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

April 20, 1933

Dear Sirs:

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For The Commission of Fine Arts:

DAVID A. FINEY,

The National Capital Planning Commission,
Interior Department Building.

Uncorrected
the Treasury and just buries in the woods that are around the White House. The White House actually would be of much more architectural impact in this vista.

MR. BIDDLE: That is Pennsylvania Avenue?

MR. PEETS: Yes. You see, he handicapped himself severely in having all these openings here coming in one corner and going out the other corner, a very dubious thing to do, but at least it must have this space to create a separate area here.

MR. BIDDLE: A chance for a good building.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Yes.

MR. PEETS: As it is now, it just flows out. It is a gap there that has no control.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: That might be a question later as to what building would go there. But I think that it would be excellent to get this wretched little temporary building out of the way. It is covered with signs. It is a very cheap ending to Pennsylvania Avenue and really takes away from the dignity of the whole situation.

Then I will write such a letter.

MR. CAEMMERER: The representative of Mr. Harris is here.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: The hotel?

MR. CAEMMERER: Foggy Bottom Hotel.

He is from 30 Rockefeller Plaza.

the presence and that family in the same that had been for
after lunch. The little house especially well as it was
eventually found in the street.

Mr. Wilson: That is the house I mean.

Mr. Wilson: Yes, you may be interested to know.

usually in having all these children have a good time
and that was the first time, a very interesting
to me, but as I said it was very interesting to me
because it was very interesting.

Mr. Wilson: I think I have seen it before.

Mr. Wilson: Yes.

Mr. Wilson: It is a very interesting house.

It is a very interesting house.

Mr. Wilson: That is the house I mean.

as to the house, it is very interesting, but I think that it
is a very interesting house, and I think that it is a very
interesting house. It is a very interesting house, and I think
that it is a very interesting house. It is a very interesting
house, and I think that it is a very interesting house.

Mr. Wilson: I will send you a letter.

Mr. Wilson: The house is very interesting.

Mr. Wilson: I will send you a letter.

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Mr. Wilson: I will send you a letter.

Mr. Wilson: I will send you a letter.

MR. PEETS: Could we hold it just a minute?

Does everybody know about that? Have you seen that?

MR. CAEMMERER: We presented it here before this in preliminary.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Is he associated with the firm?

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: John W. Harris Associates, Incorporated, Building Construction, 30 Rockefeller Plaza.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Are they builders?

MR. CAEMMERER: Mr. Churchill is his representative. They have an option on the land.

MR. PEETS: We did not take any action. What I called you about, having seen this picture --

MR. CAEMMERER: Mr. Finley thought it would be well to have the man come here for the meeting today so the Commission would have an understanding of the situation.

He is going to front the Rock Creek Parkway with his buildings. When I did get in touch with him, I soon learned that the man who gave this publicity was too far in advance of the situation.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Suppose I read the letter from him. This is from Mr. Churchill, planning consultant with John W. Harris Associates, Rockefeller Plaza. This is addressed to Mr. Caemmerer.

"We have your letter of March 27. The project was

presented to the coordinating committee, and it was our understanding that you were represented on that committee, but we find this was not the case.

"The project has not advanced very far relative to the design of individual buildings and it was our intention because of this to present it to you a little later when preliminary ideas were somewhat more definite. The publicity we regret. It was unauthorized and we had nothing to do with it. We shall be glad, however, to come before you at your meeting on April 13, at 11:30 a. m., to describe to you as discussed over the telephone, the preliminary plans. We have no elevations and only one perspective of the hotel and office buildings project which appeared in the newspapers, and this is not definite.

"Yours respectfully,

"Chester L. Churchill,

"Planning Consultant."

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Have they since secured the property?

MR. CAEMMERER: He is outside now.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I thought it was discussed at the last meeting, was it not?

MR. PEETS: No; we talked about it on the phone subsequent to that.

MR. CAEMMERER: March 26.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: So we wrote a letter to him.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Associate Harris. I wondered^{if} it

was a separate --

MR. CAEMMERER: He must have come down from Boston by night train.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Shall we ask him to come in?

Are you ready to see him?

(Enter Mr. Churchill)

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Mr. Churchill, we are very glad to have you here. Mr. Caemmerer wrote you because we would like, if possible, to know something about the plans and preliminary stages before the matter goes too far. That is the way in which we can be of most help.

First of all, can you tell us what is the situation with reference to the land? Has it been acquired, and what is the present status?

MR. CHURCHILL: Let me say that we want you to know about it. This publicity which came out in the paper was entirely premature and was not of our doing and we did not want it but Mr. Marshall who is not a member of the syndicate, although the paper says he is, gave this out for some purpose and so it is sort of "jumped the gun" because Harrison and Abramovitz who are working with me on this, it is in the early stages and we are glad to come down and show it to you but really have not got anything very much jelled yet.

The land is under option to the syndicate in New York and they are proceeding with it and hope to make this project in developing this nearly 12 acres there of land. We have worked out a plan which has been drawn up by Harris and Abramovitz for the development.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Would you like to put it on the board? Perhaps we could all see it better.

MR. CHURCHILL: Let us show the plan first. They are pinned together, as you see, there.

Now, very briefly, as you know, this is the junction of Virginia and New Hampshire Avenues here and with various streets running through. This, here, is the property which runs through over here back through here and down here. There is a little piece, this gateway and something down at the corner, which they would like to acquire but which we have not yet acquired.

Would you like to spot this on the map? Here it is right here. In relation to Washington, that is. And here is the Lower plot down here which borders on the parkway at the corner and here is this upper piece, here; the center piece which is here, and this upper piece which is right here. So that it is right as you pointed out, right on the edge. You are taking up, the Government is taking up, I think, F Street and here is F Street and here is G. Unfortunately, the syndicate does not control the land through here which

would be an awfully good thing if we could get but this is the point in which Mr. Reynolds told me that he was stopping now.

Now, the idea was here to make a circle closing the streets up here and sort of making a big, open plaza here to integrate from a planning standpoint the piece here and also to help in traffic control here. Then to come down on this lower piece here. This, by the way, is sloping here, grading something like that. So as to put a large plaza here over this piece of ground under it, have four stories of parking for cars, garage and parking.

This will be at about this grade here. Then, hotel and office buildings are to the south of it. There would be various buildings around here and also this has been slightly changed but it is more or less correct; and these buildings along here which are commercial along Virginia Avenue. This overlooks the plaza.

Then to give you some idea -- I am sorry we have not got any sketches -- but to give you some idea, this, here, is the hotel in here. This was the office building here. And this is set up here, as you see, where it drops away, with dining rooms down through here, ball room here and out through here behind those trees which I am sorry we did not have time to continue this, this plaza here, at about this level coming out here.

Underneath of this garage, this is all open and for the public and this is planned as a skating rink somewhat like that at Rockefeller Center with restaurants around it here and all connecting with the hotel and office buildings.

This is a commercial part here which would feed these other buildings through here.

Now, the general idea is to put up buildings not to compete with downtown Washington in office buildings, but we call them special-purpose office buildings.

For instance, right now negotiations are on with a large insurance company here to locate a building. He wants to make a home office and make a very monumental building that is connected with Government things so they are right nearby.

So the character, that is, the general plan of it, the character of it has not been developed except from mainly the standpoint that in these times with high costs and all, you have got to do something that looks well but we cannot go overboard in the monumental character like the buildings that have been done previously in Washington where there is a great deal of ornamentation.

Harris and Abramovitz got this up very quickly. This was gotten up quickly to show people, to give them somewhat of a visual idea of how it may run. So I do not want you to think that that is the final design that we are asking you to look at. However, we are very glad to have you look at it

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and at the general scheme and get your reactions as to its further development.

If I may, let me show you a section through here. This is the elevation as you look from the river. You see, here again is the hotel in here. That is the office building there and this is the ballrooms and restaurants. This is the depressed parts with restaurants around the skating rink. This is the garage part underneath the plaza which is here. These buildings rising from the plaza, and these are the buildings which are on Virginia Avenue. This is a section which I was speaking of that goes through the property, starting up here at 24th Street, you have this upper part, then you come to the circle. Then this was this Government insurance building I was speaking about, possibly in here in the center part. This is 26th Street which is to be widened and this is the lower area down through here, again coming up to your plaza, your section through the plaza, looking north to the buildings which is the north side of the plaza and run down to the end of Virginia Avenue, your parkway, and to the Potomac River.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Where are those large gas tanks in relation to this plaza?

MR. CHURCHILL: The ones now standing? They are on the upper plot.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Would they be very near these

buildings?

MR. CHURCHILL: Of course, those will come down.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: You control that?

MR. CHURCHILL: So far as that development is concerned, those gas tanks and all those are entirely out of there because they are -- here is where they are now, the two tanks that remain right in here.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: That would be very desirable to get rid of those.

MR. CHURCHILL: When you get through, as we visualize it, you have monumental buildings down here to the south. You have got on the west, you have got the Potomac. On the south you have got monumental buildings. As I say, we would like to acquire this little piece through here and these have got to come in and go somewhere. People will buy this up now, the ones who have got the more courage. But it looks like all monumental developments.

Now, over here to the east is George Washington University and some other buildings and then, of course, there are quite a number of buildings that are not so good. But George Washington wants to do some more in here. They probably will. And this, no doubt, would perhaps go up into semi-commercial character.

Now, to the north here, would be extremely good for apartment houses to get that slum district which it more

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Wash. D.C. 20250

TO: DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

FROM: SAC, [illegible]

SUBJECT: [illegible]

RE: [illegible]

1. [illegible]

2. [illegible]

3. [illegible]

4. [illegible]

5. [illegible]

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9. [illegible]

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13. [illegible]

14. [illegible]

or less is now, some of it cleaned out and I understand there are two projects that are being thought about in a very elementary stage now for apartment buildings up in this district here.

The Planning Commission, when they rezoned this, rezoned it residential. We do not quite see it as residential. In the first place, as you know, this land we consider this land is right within the city and almost centrally in the city so far as traffic is concerned. Not geographically but traffic-wise because you come across here right below, across the Memorial Bridge. You are on the parkway on the other side and it is the nearest place from the City of Washington to reach the airport. If you go down Virginia Avenue along Constitution, you can get to Union Station quicker than from the Statler, and there are other things there which make it a very central point.

Now, that being the case, while it is a little bit on the edge of things now, this land, of course, is going to take on tremendous value and you cannot develop the thing well in the city with just apartment houses because they do not pay. So we are asking the Planning Commission to take another look at this and think of it more from the standpoint of its, let's say, monumental -- not monumental in the sense of Government buildings, rather than simply as residential. There is a chance that we may do some apartment houses.

Washington lacks, we feel, a first-class hotel. The Harris Company who is behind this with the syndicate built the Statler Hotel. Of course, when Statler built his hotel he never expected it to be any better than a high-grade commercial hotel so you have Washington which has become practically the center of the world and capital of the world and you have not got really a first-class hotel in it.

You haven't got apartment houses in it, generally of the type like you will find in New York or some other cities. We are trying to do some better apartment houses and put them in here which would have an outlook over the river which would be a very good location for it.

So that what we have is a mass of buildings. You think of this mass and its presentation and then of different purposes to think of in detail, and to make a harmonious whole out of that group.

MR. de WELDON: What will be the heights of the buildings?

MR. CHURCHILL: Well, we are talking now with the Planning Commission on that. We would like to go, we would like to start here -- you see, this slopes down. We would like to keep a height overall here and starting up here, if we started at 110, we would wind up with 130 here and we would like to go to the 130-foot height.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Would they be in view from the

would give us the results we need.

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Lincoln Memorial.

MR. CHURCHILL: You are talking about now if you were walking around the Lincoln Memorial on the ground.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Walking along the mall, are these hid behind the trees?

MR. CHURCHILL: I don't think so, no, if you go down through there. That came up because someone said, well, this development will -- I think the word was -- "injure" and I said, I cannot conceive how it would because one is not going to be seen from the other. And to my mind, I am now talking to some gentlemen who are not laymen and maybe you won't agree but I think it is hardly possible for one piece of good architecture to injure another. They are a fair distance away. You see, here is the site there. Here is Lincoln Memorial here. And I cannot see either in height or mass how it would have much, if any, effect on it.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I think that is true. I was looking at it the other day. I do not believe, in looking down the mall, the axis going across the river toward Arlington, that you would be aware of these new buildings. They would be directly --

MR. CHURCHILL: You know, Mr. Finley, if you take the topography which is sort of rising ground here, you know the old hospital is sort of up on the hill there and all -- if you are talking about something that injures the Memorial,

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I would say the old brewery does more than anything else.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: It is undesirable.

MR. CHURCHILL: But I do not think you can ever see any relationship between those two. Even coming across the bridge you see this but you cannot see really down in here to any extent.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Where is the brewery in relation to your building?

MR. CHURCHILL: I think the brewery is here; I am not sure.

MR. CAEMMERER: D and Second. D and 26th, rather. I have the plat book here.

MR. CHURCHILL: D and 26th, is it, Mr. Caemmerer?

MR. CAEMMERER: Here are your gas tanks at Virginia and New Hampshire.

MR. CHURCHILL: That is right in here, down right there.

MR. CAEMMERER: Yes. You go down to the brewery and it is at least almost two squares south from F to E and to D. That is two squares south and then you hit the brewery and the Lincoln Memorial is still past that in relation to this proposed development here and the Lincoln Memorial is still --

MR. PEETS: In respect to this proposed development here and the Lincoln Memorial, the mere visibility between

them from the one to the other and that sort of thing is very much less than the long views that you get everywhere all the way around up and down both sides of the Potomac. This group will be seen up the Potomac, a long vista there, from Key Bridge and it will be a very conspicuous apartment. I am not saying it will be an undesirable apartment but it will be a very important, large, conspicuous apartment of the entire urban landscape, all those views along the Potomac. It will be of esthetic importance on that account, as is illustrated by some big apartment houses built down at Alexandria, the Hunting Towers, which are quite close to the water and are I do not know how many stories high but they are extremely high and a great bulk to them. They just dominate. You cannot help but look at them as you drive up from Mt. Vernon, for example. There are so many places where they come into the picture and are very conspicuous. I think that is undesirable because they have a scale that is way beyond the scale of any surrounding buildings so that I feel that your drawings, for example, might very well extend, they might make a little drawing of it to extend in both directions at least far enough south to take in the Lincoln Memorial because, so you can see how big the Lincoln Memorial is compared with these big structures. It is something that should be considered very carefully.

You say that we have not got many apartment houses,

which is very true. The esthetic value of the capital, Washington, as a whole -- for instance, what some of us call the low construction character of it, Washington is unlike any other large city in this country because you do not have any, you have so few of those high buildings. If you look at Washington over at the Little Tea House on Ridge Road, for example, and many other locations, some locations in Arlington Cemetery where you get a panoramic view of the city, and it looks so very different because the Washington Monument and several other buildings stand up and are conspicuous, even with the rather high buildings that we have now. The general feeling of the city is definitely unlike any other and it is so because it has not got a "San Geminagno" effect of skyscrapers. That is the kind of thing that we will keep our eyes on as far as possible.

MR. CHURCHILL: We think, Mr. Peets, that we are helping that. At present, I agree with you, because a lot of these, well, house clearing or apartment houses and all begin to get quite a mass. They do around New York City, of course. At the present time, with all these streets going through here, there is nothing now to prevent a whole mass of apartment houses being jammed in from street to street, right on the street line; and then you would have a whole mass of buildings in here which I think would be very undesirable. But of course, what we have done, as you can see,

there is a lot of area in between here which helps to cut down a commercial housing development as you see it in its mass because it only has little alleys of streets going through

Then, as we develop it, I mean there will be certain ups and downs within this thing because we do not want to get -- while there is a level character in a way going through, we do not think of keeping it just as a deadly level the way we show it there for these purposes.

I think the breaking of it up, and the fact that you do get in this here, that would help in my opinion any development which would go in here, would help to make it more like the Lincoln Memorial where you see that set in a park with trees around and so forth and so on.

Of course, some of the syndicate look at this and say, what about all this ground?

Well, that is the way with commercial developments. There is not a thing. I say, streets go here and here and you could pack that full from sidewalk to sidewalk. But it is a point and those are things that we have to keep in mind as we do, develop it, to keep it as much as possible, with the growing commercial aspect of the thing, in relation to the monumental aspect of Washington. Of course, fundamentally, the two are a little bit opposite. The monumental part, the taxpayer pays for and this part has got to earn its own way.

MR. BELLUSCHI: What is the reason for curving

that one wing of the hotel? Is that to give a little more view from the court and not have it so narrow?

MR. CHURCHILL: H-wing here. Yes, that was to throw it around. If you notice, if you view it from over this part of Washington here, and if we do acquire, that may change some if we do acquire this piece of land down in here. Also the bar and some restaurants are down in below there and gives a little more natural presentation.

MR. BIDDLE: Am I right when I say that the question of silhouette troubles you from the other side of the river? It does me. That is why I worry about the whole mass of that building. I am thinking of it as a silhouette. I was wondering if that could be studied to make it more interesting.

MR. CHURCHILL: I think Mr. Peets suggested that if we make a smaller-scale drawing along here and try to get those things in and study that.

MR. BIDDLE: Yes.

MR. CHURCHILL: I believe, though, that because of the fact it is broken up, if studied rightly, you are going to get from a commercial standpoint a better development out of this than you could get from some other standpoints that are permissible now under the law as it now stands.

MR. PEETS: I am not worried about the interior view. I am thinking about the huge basin of the river which we have here which is a beautiful thing when you walk across

the Memorial Bridge, for example, and on the other side, as I say, from all the other bridges, Key Bridge and so forth, new bridges that might be built, and of course, Roosevelt Island -- at the present time, the river is the grand thing that dominates that whole terrain. There is a valley there which serves the river and that is the beautiful thing, the precious thing.

MR. CAEMMERER: Would you make a model of the thing to develop it?

MR. CHURCHILL: Oh, yes, we shall make a model when we are little bit more jelled on some of these factors here.

May I say, you mentioned a bridge. May I say something about this new bridge? That might seriously affect this building development and some of the new bridge schemes would mean the City of Washington gets no revenue out of whatsoever, any development here is just killed. It is a question of whether the new bridge in this location is absolutely a necessity for the City of Washington traffic or whether they get revenue from it. I understand the District is in bad need now for some of these things.

You were thinking, for instance, what a view would be more up here, down the river -- was that it?

MR. PEETS: Yes.

MR. CHURCHILL: Of course, when you get up above here, the island begins to --

MR. PELTS: Everything there would come way above the trees on the island. Yes, they are 50 - 60 feet high.

MR. CHURCHILL: That is true. I was thinking in respect of that.

MR. PEETS: Especially if you are on an elevated site such as Georgetown University is.

MR. BIDDLE: You feel a little bit the reverse of what you said, that in this design, the people in the building do not get the advantage of the river view. You were speaking about looking at these buildings from the other side of the river.

MR. PEETS: I do not think I criticized it from that point of view.

MR. BIDDLE: I think it is important, too.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: People see that hideous development along the river, all that commercial thing that spoils the river in Georgetown.

MR. PELTS: They look straight across.

MR. CHURCHILL: We are trying to develop toward the south because this is no thing of beauty up here; it is ugly and very unattractive. That is why we are trying to develop down this way. It may be a long while before that changes.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: It would be a great advantage to see those gas tanks go down and that park rescued, so the

tall buildings are not seen from Lincoln Memorial or looking down to the mall from the Lincoln Memorial but I believe you are far enough back so you would not see these new buildings from the mall.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I think that is true. Of course, from across the river we can study that a little bit and we can take some photographs and see just about how this does.

MR. CHURCHILL: We can do that and see how this does work out in relation to the Memorial.

MR. PEETS: You know, we have some large models of the entire, practically the entire city. Do you think it would be possible to take one of those models? They are about four times as big as this table. They are at the theater at 12th Street.

MR. CAEMMERER: The Lincoln Museum.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: They contain all of it. What is the date of the letter, 1932? The Park and Planning model which should be on exhibition is in storage.

MR. PEETS: Oh.

MR. CAEMMERER: But the one at the Lincoln Museum on Tenth Street near E would give you a good idea of it.

MR. CHURCHILL: Does that take in this whole district here?

MR. CAEMMERER: Oh, yes.

MR. CHURCHILL: That may be an interesting thing.

MR. CAEMMERER: The Lincoln Museum between E and F on Tenth Street.

It used to be the old Ford Theater, site of the old theater where Abraham Lincoln was shot. They had it on the third floor.

MR. CHURCHILL: Who has control of that?

MR. CAEMMERER: National Capital Parks. There is somebody in charge there. Colonel Truet is the man to talk with. You can see him any time. You have to walk about three stories.

MR. PEETS: At the model stage, let's say, when models are undertaken, it might be possible for you to undertake some paper models and put them there. That must be a 1000-foot scale, 1000 feet to the inch.

MR. CAEMMERER: There is a picture perspective of the model that was made of the future city in the old days. There was no development there between Washington Monument which you see there at Memorial Bridge; but all that planning has been carried out in the last 50 years. Then you follow the river, you see, up to where you are going to build, plan to build.

Now, there are two models; one shows the old city which would show you to the gas --

MR. CHURCHILL: Here is Virginia Avenue right here.

MR. CHURCHILL: That was in the morning of the day.

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There is New Hampshire.

MR. CAEMMERER: Yes.

MR. CHURCHILL: This is tremendous scale here. It would take ten acres to affect that, but I agree with you; and that model and the study would have to be very helpful, would be very helpful.

MR. PEETS: It certainly is large scale. It might be 500 or something like that.

MR. CAEMMERER: Eight hundred, I believe.

MR. CHURCHILL: How do you feel as to type of architecture, style?

MR. PEETS: Yellow brick?

MR. CHURCHILL: No, limestone.

MR. BELLUSCHI: It is all right with me provided you do not try to make it monumental. I am glad you are not trying to make a monument out of it.

MR. CHURCHILL: Don't you think -- here is a chance to get some million-dollar advice free -- don't you think really in the development of this problem here that this is a commercial proposition? As I say, there is nothing to prevent anybody going in there and building to the street line, a whole lot of brick buildings with no character at all. These are residential buildings; they pass the zoning. Well, I don't know, perhaps this Commission could stop it or something but generally speaking so far as the city is concerned, laws

and everything else, that could be done. And that would be done. Why? Because it is a good real estate development and people make money out of it from the apartment house. This thing has to pay its way, yes, otherwise it is not an economic thing to do. Washington cannot develop unless it pays its way and it can pay taxes to the city and so forth. So you have got a certain practical viewpoint there. And when we begin to talk square-foot price or cubage price, this thing is a lot different than, for instance, if you are going to build the Department of Commerce building over again; and what we would like to make it is limestone facing so as to give it an overall character which is well, I think you would call it monumental as opposed to commercial.

MR. BELLUSCHI: I think this is somewhat an example of what we were talking about, with good detail, could be a very distinguished building and the human scale, the only thing that this is not quite, and I realize it is just a preliminary sketch, it is just a bit too many courts. That is a unit that somehow, well, the scale of the office building is a little bit conflicting, but it has too many courts and therefore you feel that the human beings will be looking into each other. It is true a narrow court which is rather institutional -- so that that is more a question of planning and I realize also that you have to make the best of a certain area, but as architecture, I think it promises good

detail which I am sure the architecture will give, will be a good example of what I was talking about earlier in the morning. So it seems to be very good to me.

MR. CHURCHILL: That is right, Mr. Belluschi, because there was one time we studied this to get away from fingers so are you down, you are down not looking on courts and --

MR. BELLUSCHI: Instead of having these -- these are all bothersome because you just look through -- it is kind of like a bee hive -- there was a star-shaped something like this where the court can go omre than 90 degrees so you would have a view and those are things that come with the plan more than anything else, but I am glad to see there is variety and variation and still unity and I would not mind even seeing it in brick. Limestone, of course, is good material which helps to keep unity with the rest of Washington.

MR. CHURCHILL: You see, what we have done here in planning, it is sort of creating a little city within a city because we have, these do not take in, this plan here, SOME OF the traffic changes. This street has to be widened, H Street. There may be something here. As a matter of fact, the whole traffic studies here have been pretty much impinged on this bridge going over here. What we are trying to do now, with them, is to make these traffic studies so as to use what we have got here, to relieve the situation somewhat, if they need another bridge going over it, to put it in

a good example of how I was being treated in the

country. It is better to be very poor than to be

very rich. I am very poor, but I am very happy.

I am very poor, but I am very happy.

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another location. But that is the reason for the 2000 cars which has been studied. Planning was interested in this Harrison-Allen report and we are way under that, what they allow on that.

One day at the Planning Commission we had a nice little talk because two or three of the members were bound to talk as to what happened during the last 25 years in Washington as to what you should do and I wanted to talk in terms of what is going to happen in the next 25 years in Washington and what is going to be done. I think that is the viewpoint with which this ought to be taken, because in all of these cities, and Washington is not aloof from it, we are running into problems of can the city exist or does it go bankrupt? In New York and Boston and Washington and all of them. And I think one of the approaches is that the city is not realistic on the real estate problem because that is a source of great income and you cannot overload it and kill the golden goose but on the other hand with certain city planning you can increase revenues tremendously.

So, we are trying to think here, we are thinking of that, in 1953, revenues which is a different thing that thinking of it back in the 40s or the 30s and as to the future, what is going to happen in Washington. And I think it is possible to compromise and work the thing out. But it may make a little different pattern than some of what has gone

anybody's business. But still it is a matter for the people to

which has been decided. Visiting the University is still

the same as before. Not only the old and the new, but the

same as before. Not only the old and the new, but the

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before.

MR. PEETS: Of course, there are a lot of unknown factors about the future. Do you know about the East River report? That is partly secret but for the most part public. It is a study made by some people in the Government and a group of nine universities which have not been named, of the effect of atomic bombing on city planning and the report is just now being published and read. The day is coming quickly when it will have quite an effect on city planning. I would not say but what this would be the answer, and this would be all right under the danger signals of the East River Report, presented there.

I do think, however, that one way or another, favorably or unfavorably, it would be influenced by that kind of thinking, not this year or next year, but of course, sometime.

As for the block plan, I agree with Mr. Belluschi's remark that it seems to be, there seem to be a large number of small divisions and I must say that I do not like some of the spots on the plans, some of the relations between the buildings, those standing at the angle of Virginia Avenue and those standing at the grid-iron system, for instance, up above in the commercial buildings, on Virginia Avenue, the relation of those blocks to the parallelograms below it.

MR. CHURCHILL: That is right. That has been

changed in recent studies.

MR. PEETS: That seems to me to need relieving.

And that group over at the east of the circle.

There are a good many lines there that might be more coherent, let us say.

That is the impression I got when I first looked at it.

MR. CHURCHILL: Yes, I see what you mean.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Mr. Belluschi.

THE AUTHOR'S NOTE

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MR. BELLUSCHI: Looking first to this and this, too, the relationship there.

MR. PEETS: Beyond, up farther in the largest building on Virginia Avenue, the relation of that, the Court back of that and so on. That is all being changed.

MR. CHURCHILL: This is something like a projet and this was drawn up by a man who got out of Yale, he does not have to come from Harvard, but really, you know what is going to happen on this, when you go out and you sell this thing and you get these people and you get these buildings and some of the others are going to get into it and get down to brass tacks and pull it down, but it is in the projet. I think your criticism is well taken.

MR. PEETS: When I first glanced at it, isn't this a swell chance to break away from the gridiron to have your court there. That has been tinted in in yellow and instead of having that agree with the gridiron, have that swing around and run diagonally straight across the river. On the perpendicular, why do all these buildings have to conform to the gridiron?

MR. CHURCHILL: To bring this on this axis, you mean?

MR. PEETS: Yes, so that there would be a radius of the curve, or something of that sort.

MR. BELLUSCHI: It would be very interesting. And also what Mr. Biddle was saying, that after all, the people, enjoy

the view and they are looking down to the south and some of them they do not get. Of course you cannot expect to get all of them but there has to be a higher percentage of rooms having a better view than is possible with this plan. That is something I am sure that will come.

MR. CHURCHILL: To go back to what you said about the atomic bomb, I do not know much about that but last year I was head of a group that made a survey for the Atomic Energy Commission and that was in relation as to the buildings and then this came up. I found there was a great difference of opinion among experts as to this atomic thing. Finally, it was in the site at Denver where they are making atomic energy including military missiles and all, that was done on the basis of dispersion and other things there which is more or less a principle, I imagine they are going to work out in the cities. But it was very interesting the difference of opinion we found among experts and getting back here to Washington and getting something resolved because it is quite a thing. But I do think that this basically probably comes nearer to something like that than other planning which we are doing.

MR. PEETS: The fundamental test would be the density, the number of units per acre.

MR. CHURCHILL: I think if you got something more ideal for the atomic bomb, I do not know whether you could do it economically. I think your economics of it would be such that

you would not get enough out of it so you have got to take, it was finally decided you have got to take a certain amount of, well, let us not call it chance, but a certain amount of risk, calculated risk.

MR. PEETS: Whatever that means.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: We will be interested as you get further along in seeing what you develop.

MR. CHURCHILL: Thank you gentlemen very much. I will keep in touch from time to time. I think perhaps now is -- you see, we are getting towards zoning changes and other things and I imagine that, of course that is going to have some effect on it. And so, why don't I keep in touch with Mr. Caemmerer and I will be glad to come down and see you again at any time when it looks like we are to a point where it is worth your time to give your thoughts on it.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Good. We are very much interested because it is of tremendous importance, a tremendously important development.

MR. CHURCHILL: We feel it is and we feel it is perhaps something that has a little idealism mixed with the commercial because you get, as one banker, financial man said, I do not know but when you plan these things how in the world do you plan them, you leave so much empty ground it does not pay you any money and you get a lot of that attitude, so it is a matter of -- but on the other hand, Mr. Harris, with

some of the others, have much feeling; well, this is something that should have all the character and dignity that Rockefeller Center has although it is not a Rockefeller Center, of course, except that it does cover about the same area.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: If you developed it as parkway with very few fountains by very famous sculptors that would help commercial aspects because the buildings become known by reason of those features. You could really do quite a lot there.

MR. CHURCHILL: That is very true. We have not, for instance, we have not shown here the Netherlands, the representative of the Netherlands has been talking to us and said, why don't you build a tower and put a carillon in it which we gave the United States Government. There are various things like that which may be called embellishments rather than fundamentals but which are being considered but not shown on the plan.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I think Rockefeller Center, the feature that we think of most are the fountains and the flowers the change in flowers in those courts, those are the things.

MR. PEETS: And the skating rink.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: The skating rink, yes.

MR. CHURCHILL: That is very true.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Thank you very much for coming.

(Exit Mr. Churchill)

TO : Mr. David Finley

DATE: April 9, 1953

FROM : Ronald F. Lee

SUBJECT: There is attached copy of a letter of March 25 from the Secretary of the Interior to the President concerning temporary buildings in the parks, for your information. This is the letter Mr. Wirth mentioned at luncheon the other day at the Gallery.

1991-1992

FROM : Ronald F. Lee

C O P Y

March 25, 1953

Natl.Cap.Pks.
Jett
Gartside
H. Thompson
Kelly
Vint
R. F. Lee
Tolson
Wirth
Shanklin

Rewritten by: Wirth
Lewis

My dear Mr. President:

During World War II, permits were issued by this Department for the erection of some 43 temporary buildings in the public parks of the Nation's Capital, subject to the provision that they would be removed at the end of the war emergency. Although eight years have now elapsed since the close of World War II, these structures still mar the beauty of the settings for the Capitol, White House, Washington Monument, Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, and the Federal Triangle.

These buildings destroy to a considerable degree the efforts of the Federal Government over a period of more than 50 years to restore and develop the principal features of the original plan of Washington. The National Capital Planning Commission, the Commission of Fine Arts, the American Institute of Architects, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Planning and Civic Association, and a large number of other private individuals and organizations have long urged their removal. Washington newspapers have strongly supported the restoration of the park areas as an essential step toward the preservation of the character, dignity and beauty of the National Capital.

It is my recommendation that these structures be removed at the earliest expedient time. A policy may be established for their gradual removal at an early date by the demolition of Temporary Building "S", soon to be vacated by the Office of Price Stabilization, with the understanding that all others will be likewise dismantled as rapidly as they become untenanted.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) Douglas McKay

Secretary of the Interior

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Garfield
H. Thompson
Vint
R. F. Lee
Smith
Shanklin

Revised by: Smith
Lewis

Dear Mr. President:

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end of the war emergency. Although eight years have now elapsed since
close of World War II, these structures still mar the beauty of the
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to the original plan, for the preservation of the National Capital.

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Secretary of the Interior

Washington, D. C.

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

April 20, 1953

My dear Mr. Secretary:

At a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts held on April 13th, the Commission were pleased to receive, through the National Park Service, a copy of your letter addressed to the President, recommending removal of temporary war buildings from the Mall and other park areas in Washington. The Commission entirely agree with the views expressed in your letter and hope that these buildings may be removed at the earliest opportunity.

The Commission feel that, since the preservation of the L'Enfant Plan, with its central composition of the Mall, its parks and open spaces, is of the greatest importance to the City of Washington, both now and in the future, intrusions on the Mall and on the public parks in the form of temporary office buildings, erected to meet emergency war-time conditions, should not be allowed to remain after the emergency has passed. Many of these buildings are no longer suitable for use as office buildings and, by reason of location and design, mar the appearance of the parks and streets of the District of Columbia.

In the opinion of the Commission, the removal at this time of even one of the temporary buildings would impress the people of this country with the earnest effort now being made for a reduction of government expenditures and personnel in the establishments of the Federal Government in Washington.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.

David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Honorable Douglas McKay
Secretary of the Interior
Washington, D. C.

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For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David H. Finley,
Chairman.

Honorable Douglas McKay
Secretary of the Interior
Washington, D. C.

REMOVAL OF TEMPORARY BUILDINGS

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Mr. McKay, the new Secretary of the Interior, has written a letter to the President dated March 25, with reference to the removal of temporary buildings. He says:

"During World War II, permits were issued by this Department for the erection of some 43 temporary buildings in the public parks of the nation's capital subject to the provision that they would be removed at the end of the war emergency. Although eight years have now elapsed since the close of World War II, these structures still mar the beauty of the settings for the capitol, White House, Washington Monument, Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, and the Federal Triangle.

"These buildings destroy to a considerable degree the effort of the Federal Government over a period of more than 50 years to restore and develop the principal features of the original plan of Washington. The National Capital Planning Commission, the Commission of Fine Arts, the American Institute of Architects, the American Planning and Civic Association, and a large number of other private individuals and organizations have long urged their removal. Washington newspapers have strongly supported the restoration of the park areas as an essential step toward the preservation of the character, dignity and beauty of the national capital.

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"Sincerely yours

"Douglas McKay,

"Secretary of the Interior."

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Which is Temporary Building S, as a matter of curiosity?

MR. CAEMMERER: It is the one at 14th and Pennsylvania Avenue.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: The little triangle building there facing the Treasury.

MR. CAEMMERER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: That, as you know, as the one we have discussed many times in this Commission. I feel that if that building could be taken down, it would not only be the beginning of carrying out this policy of removing the temporary buildings but would really serve as a rather dramatic dramatization of the policy of reducing the bureaucracy of the Federal Government which the President is committed to. I would like to write a letter, if this Commission approves, to the President and may say that that the Secretary of the Interior and Mr. Wirth -- I discussed this with Mr. Wirth last

week, that he said he was sending me a copy of this letter so the Commission could know that it had been written and would welcome a letter from the Commission of Fine Arts to the President supporting what the Secretary of the Interior has proposed here and I said that I would put in, probably put in the letter that I thought the removal of "S" building would dramatize the whole program of economy in Government.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Good point.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I feel we would have accomplished something in our lives if we could get that little triangular building at the head of Pennsylvania Avenue cleared away.

MR. BELLUSCHI: I wonder what Mr. McKay --

MR. PEETS: Harry Thompson wrote that letter.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Also Mr. Wirth. Mr. Wirth is very very keen about it and the new Assistant Secretary, Mr. Lewis. I discussed it at length and he also feels strongly about it so we have an administration now that is really in favor of getting rid of these buildings.

MR. BIDDLE: Do you need a motion to do that? It is a wonderful idea.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I would like to have a motion saying that you have read the letter of the Secretary of the Interior and the Commission is in hearty agreement with it and it requests the chairman to write a similar letter to the President.

MR. BIDDLE: I so move.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Second.

MR. PEETS: Yes, this is the way to do it, to put that in -- not in the galley, but in this letter.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: This has nothing to do with our report, I think. We have covered that as fully as we should in our report, I think. But I think a letter to the President might have some effect.

MR. BIDDLE: It has been moved and seconded.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: All in favor say aye; opposed, no.

(The motion was then put to a vote and unanimously carried.)

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: It would be a great deal if we could ever get that building down.

MR. PEETS: If there is time. In fact, I would like to have this off the record.

(Discussion off the record)

MR. BELLUSCHI: The buildings along the mall, the scale and looks and location, you think they should be removed?

MR. PEETS: Those that are on the south side of Constitution Avenue and on the north side of Independence Avenue; that far back they are of very little importance to me. I rather like those buildings than the ones further down

but the building which comes way up to the mall drives and to the big, 300-foot open space, those interrupt the four lines of elms on each side; those should come out.

MR. BELLUSCHI: This is a beginning. I was thinking that in this we are in agreement that they are temporary buildings, that the whole idea of temporary buildings should be tackled and eventually eliminated. I am not so optimistic to think that they will be eliminated in this administration but nevertheless, by saying you are not committing yourself and not following the L'Enfant Plan and leaving that leakage of space, as you call it, and therefore you could still say that, what the plan will be, but it will be remembered that if the L'Enfant Plan calls for a building, it should be of a quality that would be a help rather than detract, so that the two are not inconsistent, it seems to me.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: We are not recommending what should go in place of the triangle, but we are recommending that the very undignified, temporary, inadequate building should be removed which should have been done years ago. It does not seem to me that is a matter for debate, that there is any debate about that; that building ought to be removed regardless what is put in its place, a monumental building or a fountain.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Since there is not too much space

in Washington, it releases space for building. The L'Enfant Plan might recognize that as being useful.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I am not ready to vote, myself, to have a building there. I think another beautiful fountain at the head of Pennsylvania Avenue would be more pleasing to me than a building but in any event are we in agreement that we would like to have the present temporary building removed? Are you voting for that, also?

MR. PEETS: Yes, I would not be fussy at all about that. In fact, four or five years ago General Grant wrote me about that building and that is what he asked me, what I thought about it, and I gave him the same story that I told here. The design, as presented, would require as a site the park area of two squares, thus eliminating the park area which is at present available to the public.

MR. BELLUSCHI: That is the building. That is the channel of space. And here is picked up by Treasury. That is what he intended, that the Treasury should pick up here and that you would have this space going through here and striking the dome as he was going to put it.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: You can also do that by having Treasury on both sides of this.

MR. BIDDLE: Where is the Treasury?

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Right here.

MR. PEETS: The Treasury comes out to the curb. If you take the curb and project it here, it cuts the corner, this corner of the Treasury. Most of the space flows past

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C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

May 1, 1953

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In January, 1940, the Municipal Architect of the District of Columbia submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts studies for a central building for the District of Columbia Library, designed for a site on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue, between John Marshall Place and 6th Street, N. W. The Librarian of the District of Columbia urged the erection of the building, and the plans were approved at a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts held on July 8, 1940. Subsequently, the Congress appropriated over a million dollars for the first unit and the building was erected. Since that time, owing in part to the conditions that prevailed during World War II, the other units of the central library building at the location above mentioned have not been erected; and the surroundings of the present building present a very unsightly appearance.

During the months of April and May, 1952, the present Municipal Architect and the present Librarian of the District of Columbia submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts a design for a central library building at 8th and K Streets, N. W., which would replace the existing library building at that location. The design, as presented, would require as a site the park area of two squares, thus eliminating the park area which is at present available to the public. The Commission of Fine Arts considered the design at a meeting held on May 19, 1952, and disapproved the erection of the proposed library on the site at 8th and K Streets. The National Park Service and the National Capital Planning Commission concurred with the Commission of Fine Arts in this decision.

Notwithstanding the action taken at that time by the authorities above mentioned, it appears that a model has been made of the proposed central library building, to be erected at 8th and K Streets, which would replace the existing building on that site. A photograph of the model appeared in the Sunday Star of April 12, 1953, which was brought to the attention of the Commission of Fine Arts. The Commission have asked that I bring the matter to your attention and to ask that the use of park land at 8th and K Streets, N. W., be denied if application should be made to the Department of the Interior for the use of this site for a new library building.

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.

David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Honorable Douglas McKay
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D. C.

DEF/amv

cc: Mr. Caemmerer

EXHIBIT I

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

May 1, 1953

Mr. Secretary:

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